

Cut Stump Treatments and Fire

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I always like it when someone asks me a question that I haven't had before. It means I have to stop and think about it for a minute or take some time to look it up and research it. I had a new one come in last week. Someone was clearing a pasture of trees and brush. They were applying cut stump treatments as they went and wondered how long they needed to wait to burn the pasture so they didn't reduce the effectiveness of the cut stump herbicide treatment. A very good question. When we cut a woody plant down, other than cedars of course that don't sprout, we need to treat with a herbicide fairly soon afterwards. The minute you cut a tree down, the stump of that tree is going to start trying to seal off that injury from the rest of the tree that is still in the ground. Granted, while we may see sap flowing out of the stump for several days, the tree quickly starts to seal off that cut surface. Regardless of the time of year I like to see that fresh cut surface treated within 5 minutes but definitely within about 15 or 20. Generally, 24 hours after it has been cut, it is questionable how much herbicide will get taken up without re-cutting or drilling the stump to get down to fresh living tissue. So, to circle back to the original question, 24 hours after cutting and treating it is unlikely that the stump will be moving very much more of the herbicide into the root system. After 24 hours you should be able to safely burn the pasture without the herbicide effectiveness being reduced by the fire passing over the stump. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Alfalfa Weevil

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. The good news is that I haven't been seeing much damage on the alfalfa from those really cold temperatures. The bad news is that I was seeing more and more alfalfa weevil as last week went along which is exactly what I expected that we'd see. The cooler weather this week is going to slow down the weevil more than it will slow down the alfalfa and that's a good thing. I've heard rumors that there were some spray rigs rolling on alfalfa fields last week and that really annoys me if that's true. It's still too early! What you have to remember about alfalfa weevil is that you have to get the spray directly on them. There is no systemic activity in the insecticides. These aren't stomach poisons like some of the good old products of 40 years ago, these are contact poisons. They have to get ON the insect to be effective. If you spray today, and the weevil larvae doesn't hatch out of the egg until tomorrow, you will not get any control. If you sprayed early in the morning when the weather was cold and the weevil larvae was still down at the base of the plant, it is unlikely that you will have gotten much control. We are still getting eggs hatching and probably will for another week. I don't know how much spring egg laying there has been as the alfalfa has been too short to even run my sweep net through. But unless you are going out and finding weevil damage in every single stem, then it's too early to spray. Spray when it's at least 50 degrees, preferably sunny and use 15 gpa or more! This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Wheat Condition

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I've been spending a lot of time looking at wheat the past ten days. While I think a lot of the wheat escaped freeze injury, by the end of last week I was seeing some that I wasn't too sure about. But here's where the picture starts to get cloudy. By the time we got to the end of last week we'd had three days of highs into the 80s and the dry conditions in many of the wheat fields were really starting to become apparent. The older tillers that I was splitting open the first of the week all were a crisp greenish white color. But by the end of the week some were starting to show some yellowish color that wasn't quite as healthy. I'm not just sure yet how much of that was heat, drought or freeze damage. At least this week we're back down to cooler weather which in the long run is better on even drought stressed wheat. But here is what is again concerning me especially in wheat fields that were planted into soybean stubble no till. I've been finding an awfully lot of plants where the seed is, what I consider, to be too shallow. For good root development we need at least an inch and preferably an inch and a half space between the seed and the soil surface. I've been in a lot of fields where there's less than a half inch. If you have fields where the wheat seems to be going backwards, the first thing I'd do is dig up some plants and see how deep the seed is. If the seed is fairly close to the surface, or worse yet, under residue but on top of the soil surface, you've found your problem. Gotta get that seed deeper. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Not burning? What can you do?

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Life is always full of opportunities. In agriculture what we do and when we do it is so strongly dictated by the weather. Essentially, we're not making the rules or establishing the parameters, so we just have to ebb and flow along with whatever happens. Have you seen much pasture burning in the Flint Hills so far this spring? Yeah, neither have I. Between weather conditions that simply won't allow it and concerns about moisture, or lack thereof, we haven't had a lot of burning. That doesn't mean that you can't do anything in your pasture this year. Take the time to do some herbicidal or mechanical brush control. If you want, you can bush hog down stands of brush - be it sumac, dogwood or buckbrush. What I'd recommend doing is to have one person on a tractor and another person coming right in behind with a sprayer and start individually spraying the cut off stems of those species. All of these are going to re-sprout after mowing so a herbicide treatment immediately following the bush hog will help damage the root systems and start adding another layer of control. We have numerous brush control products labeled for cut surface treatment of woody plants. The list includes Crossbow, dicamba, Arsenal, Pathfinder II, Remedy Ultra, Trycera, PastureGard HL, Milestone and Tordon 22K. Follow mixing instructions because cut surface treatments are mixed much stronger than foliar treatments. Some will require mixing with kerosene or diesel. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Compaction

This is Ag Outlook on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As I've been out in a lot of fields over the past couple of weeks working on wheat evaluation there is one nearly universal condition I've been encountering, well, other than dry soils. That is, compaction. Compaction is nothing new, but it is getting worse. Compaction is caused by running equipment on soil when it is somewhat damp. I'm not talking a muddy sloppy mess damp, I'm talking field capacity or slightly less. What in most situations we'd consider good conditions to be doing field work. I've dug wheat out of the ground that showed root development consistent with sidewall compaction at planting. I've dug up wheat where the roots went down about 1 and a half inches and then went horizontal in all directions until if found a fissure it could send roots down in. It's out there and sad to say in many cases, no-till farming is making it worse. Freezing and thawing isn't going to make it go away, wetting and drying isn't going to fix it over a season. Bigger and heavier equipment is part of the problem. No till let's us roll on soils wetter than the days of conventional tillage would have allowed. We need to start looking at cover crops. We've got to start looking at being more careful when we roll equipment. We need to consider at least trying some deep ripping operations when the soil is dry - the current year may be a good year for that. We didn't get into this problem in one season and we aren't going to fix it in one season, but we need to start before it gets worse. This has been Ag Outlook on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.